

THE STUDY OF MAN

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS, OR WHAT YOU WILL

A Layman's View

STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

THE recent books on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Jewish monastic community at Qumran that produced them almost unanimously disavow a scholarly audience.* Allegro calls his Pelican paperback "a small popular volume" attempting "to give to the general public some conception of the extent and importance of recent discoveries in this area." Fritsch is somewhat more equivocal, stating, "It is my purpose to relate these thrilling discoveries and present their significance for Biblical studies in a way that will catch the imagination of the general reader, and at the same time be practical for the student who may wish to pursue the subject more thoroughly." Gaster writes flatly: "This book is addressed to laymen." Graystone says he is reprinting his articles from a theological quarterly "in the hope that they may be of interest to a wider public." Whitman's stapled pamphlet defines its intention as "the hope that it can, in some small measure, alleviate" the "tremendous need that Americans in all walks of life were beginning to feel for a full but concise treatment of

the subject, in layman's language." Only Rowley makes no concession to a popular audience, but then his book turns out to have been published in 1952, and reissued unchanged after widespread interest in the subject had been created. All in all, no layman need feel abashed in the presence of these volumes, even if he reads no Semitic language and does not know a palimpsest from a Carbon 14 dating.

The principal by-product of the Scrolls to date seems to be controversy. "Some of the discussions have savored of propaganda and a needlessly sharp note has been frequently introduced," Rowley says in his moderate way. "This has prejudiced the discussion and has made more difficult the attainment of agreed solutions." The debate against one bold scholar, he adds, "has not always been carried on with the serenity of a purely scientific discussion." Putting it more graphically, Gaster says the controversy has been as hot and dark as the caves themselves. Yet the principal impression the reader gets from the six books under discussion is not so much of controversy as of a Sunday outing on the madhouse lawn, with everyone mumbling his own fancies and no

THE Dead Sea Scrolls have been discussed in COMMENTARY by two Bible scholars, H. L. Ginsberg (in "The Cave Scrolls and the Jewish Sect," July 1953, and "More Light from Judean Caves," November 1955) and Theodor H. Gaster ("The 'Sons of Light,'" September 1956). Here STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN, professor of literature and folk literature at Bennington College and a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, ventures as a layman into the bewildering mass of conflicting scholarly interpretations of the Scrolls. Mr. Hyman's most recent previous appearance in our pages was with "The 'Two Worlds' of David Daiches" (September 1956).

**The Dead Sea Scrolls*, by J. M. Allegro (Penguin Books, 208 pp., illustrated, \$.85); *The Qumran Community: Its History and Scrolls*, by Charles T. Fritsch (Macmillan, 147 pp., illustrated, \$3.25); *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, in English translation with introduction and notes by Theodor H. Gaster (Doubleday, 350 pp., \$4.00); *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Originality of Christ*, by Geoffrey Graystone S. M. (Sheed and Ward, 117 pp., \$2.50); *The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, by H. H. Rowley (Distributed by Macmillan, 133 pp., \$3.75); *The Dead Sea Scrolls and What They Mean to Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, by Arthur Whitman (Charlton Publications, 64 pp., \$.35).

one listening to anyone else. So much, apparently, can the Scrolls be made to demonstrate precisely what the demonstrator already had in mind that it is hard to believe that these writers are talking about the same documents (as it would be hard to believe that the blind men were describing the same elephant).

John Marco Allegro is thirty-four years old, a teacher of Comparative Semitic Philology at the University of Manchester, and one of the international team of scholars piecing together scroll fragments at the Jerusalem Museum in Jordan. Allegro may be a prodigy of philology, but he does not seem characterized by the scholarly temperament or habits of caution. After some sensational interpretations of the material in talks on the BBC in January 1956 had produced dissents from his fellow scholars at the Museum and a public reproof from his colleague and former teacher Rowley, Allegro backed down, and *The Dead Sea Scrolls* omits some of his bolder reconstructions. In the *New Statesman and Nation*, October 27, 1956, Edmund Wilson reviewed Allegro's book enthusiastically, identifying him as one of the "scholars with no clerical commitments" of whom Wilson says: "They are free, as the ordained scholars—sometimes Protestant and Jewish as well as Catholic—do not always seem to be, to piece a story together, to speculate on what must have happened."

As Wilson says, Allegro apparently has no religious bias, aside from traces of a conservative Christianity that calls the doctrine of justification by grace "the warmth of a familiar hearth," and identifies the New Testament miracles of feedings and healings as eschatological ("signs of the ultimate victory") rather than humanitarian. However, his book shows at least one marked bias, pro-Arab and anti-Israel, which may be natural or may be the artificial protective coloration of a scholar working under the Jordan government. Allegro writes of brave little Jordan: "Every penny has to be put to urgent use, and development schemes cry out for attention if the meager resources of the country are to be stretched to support an abnormally swollen population. With an enemy at her gates, she must forever keep a standing army at the alert, which drains her reserves intolerably."

Noting that for many years before the discoveries the Bedouin had been collecting guano in the scroll caves and selling it in Bethlehem, Allegro suggests wittily (and ungrammatically)

that it is not at all improbable "that the Jewish orange groves near Bethlehem were fertilized with priceless ancient manuscripts written by their forefathers."

The real problem is that, like pro-Arab Englishmen generally, Allegro is a retarded adolescent romantic. His account of the discovery and purchase of the Scrolls is written in the language of the cheap thriller: "Events now had taken a sinister turn. If Jabra's fears were justified, it meant that this dealer and his confederates were willing to go to any length to avoid interference in their territory. It was clear that from now on the game would be played to very high stakes, perhaps to higher values than mere money."

Allegro's ultimate interest in the Scrolls seems to lie in constructing a melodramatic story: the evidence regarding the Qumran community "points to the early influence of a very strong personality"; he deduces (from no evidence) that the sect's "Teacher of Righteousness" probably set up as a rival high priest to Alexander Jannaeus, the "Wicked Priest" in his interpretation; and as his book's high point Allegro creates a garish cinema confrontation scene between them: "In any case, the scene as these two priests faced one another must have been dramatic enough. The one, haughty and proud, scarred by the wounds of many battles, and the ravaging of a lifetime of greed and lechery, the other, white-robed and saintly, gazing scornfully on his enemy, secure in his simple trust in God and the hope of resurrection to eternal life." As for ties between the Qumran sect and Jesus, the withdrawal into the desert for forty days "is the key to the whole life and teaching of Jesus," and Jesus threw down his challenge to the Devil and his forces "perhaps only a mile or two from Qumran itself."

CHARLES T. FRITSCH is a Presbyterian clergyman, an associate professor of Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, whose visiting lectureship at the American Schools of Oriental Research in Jerusalem seems to have occasioned *The Qumran Community: Its History and Scrolls*. He writes in the pulpit style of ringing clichés so democratically shared by all the religions in America—"Little did the unsuspecting Bedouin realize," "to date with uncanny accuracy"—and displays its special fondness for the *non sequitur*—"The large natural caves have been used by Bedouin

shepherds through the centuries, so that the archaeological evidence in them is very meager."

Fritsch shows a curious literalness in reading the Scrolls. Alone of these six writers, he takes "The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness" to refer to a literal rather than an apocalyptic war, at least to the extent of assuming from it that the community "had numerous banners and a complicated military organization." Following out its apocalyptic fantasies, he sees the tiny Qumran community of a few hundred studious ascetics lined up in serried ranks of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Fritsch is as pro-Jewish as Allegro is pro-Arab: quoting A. Dupont-Sommer's "fitting tribute to these fallen heroes of Israel"; welcoming the under-cover purchase of the Metropolitan Samuel's four scrolls for Israel so that "once again all the manuscripts discovered in Cave 1 will be together in the land and among the people that gave them birth two thousand years ago"; taking the Hebrew documents from the time of the Second Revolt found in the cave at Murabba'at as evidence "of the high cultural level of common people" among Jewry at the time; even noting the ironic implications of the guano traffic without any of Allegro's nasty bite: "it is quite possible that the orange groves around Bethlehem were fertilized with fragments of papyrus or skin from the caves."

All of this adds up to the Scrolls as an affirmation of the common "Judaean-Christian" heritage so important to liberal Protestantism. Fritsch welcomes all connections, and ends with theology as a seamless garment. The early Church Father Origen, who tells of the finding of manuscripts in a jar near Jericho during the reign of Caracalla, may have taken scrolls from these very caves. Like the later Christians, Fritsch holds, the Qumran community had a genuine baptism, not a rite of lustration, in that they believed "The Holy Spirit, and not water, cleanses a man of his iniquities," and they had a sacramental meal "at which the Messiah was present." Furthermore, their Messiah was not the traditional Jewish Davidic king in glory but the Suffering Servant of Deutero-Isaiah. "The way was now theologically prepared for the coming of God's Son," Fritsch writes, "in whom the Messianic hopes of Israel were to be fulfilled and the mission of the Servant realized. These profound Messianic teachings of the Essenes must have been known by Jesus."

THEODOR H. GASTER, professor of Comparative Religion at the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning in Philadelphia, and an outstanding Hebraist and Semitic philologist, is no stranger to the readers of COMMENTARY. *The Dead Sea Scriptures* offers itself as "a complete and reliable translation of the celebrated Dead Sea Scrolls," and its belly-band shrieks: "For the FIRST time The ACTUAL TEXT of the DEAD SEA SCROLLS." Gaster has worked scrupulously in every case "from the facsimile plates, not from the editors' transcriptions," and he announces his intention of following this volume with another explaining and justifying its translations. The present book, he assures us, "does not gear these renderings to any particular theory, but allows the documents to raise their own voice and give their own testimony amid the din and hubbub of current controversy about them."

On the basis of his own notes and explanations, some of Gaster's versions seem remarkably free. He reverses the meaning of one passage in the Zadokite Document (the manuscript that preceded the cave finds, discovered in a Cairo *genizah* and published by Solomon Schechter in 1910 as *Fragments of a Zadokite Work*). As Gaster says in his notes, the text reads: "If a human being falls into a place of water or into a place of . . . let no man bring him up by ladder or a rope or by any other implement." Gaster renders it as: "If a human being falls into a place of water or into a dark place, one is to bring him up by means of a ladder or a rope or some other instrument."

His justification is that the text's reading "would be against the universal Jewish rule that Sabbath laws may be broken in cases of life and death." Elsewhere Gaster inserts whole lines with such explanations as: "This restoration is based on the assumption that there is once again a play on the expression 'lift up,'" or "in order to bring out the nexus of thought I have had to resort to a certain amount of expansion and paraphrase." At other times he ends a hymn with a Shakespearean couplet, or alternates what he calls "Biblical English" with such slang as "will 'put their bite' on thee," or omits from a text "a series of esoteric glosses."

Oddly accompanying this liberal theory of translation, and apparently justifying it, is a conservatism in interpretation more extreme than that of any other scholar I have read on the Scrolls. Gaster devotes a whole section of

his introduction to a warning against attempts to "historicize" the Scrolls, "that is, to detect in them precise and specific historical allusions," or even "to speculate about historical allusions." It is this tendency, he believes, that has "compromised (or at least embarrassed)" the "true understanding" of the Scrolls to date. As for the parallels so many scholars have found between the Scrolls and Christianity, the covenanters "were in no sense Christians and held none of the fundamental theological doctrines of the Christian faith." There is in the Scrolls "no trace of any of the cardinal theological concepts—the incarnate Godhead, Original Sin, redemption through the Cross, and the like—which make Christianity a distinctive faith."* At the same time, the religious ideas of the Scrolls "served largely as the seedbed of the New Testament."

What motivates Gaster seems to be a familiar combination of Jewish pride and exclusiveness. *The Dead Sea Scriptures* is dedicated "To the Memory of the Men of Qumran," and the preface explains:

"More than to all the foregoing, however, the writer adheres to the view that the Dead Sea Scrolls should be regarded as something more than the subject matter of a scholarly controversy. For those who will read them sympathetically, they possess value in their own right as conveying the religious message of men who gave up the world and were able to find God in a wilderness, simply because they preferred nakedness to motley and because they realized that, in the larger analysis, crucifixion can itself be resurrection."

In Gaster's hands, the Scrolls demonstrate high Jewish religious experience independent of Christianity, but comparable to its ethical and aesthetic heights. It is this that leads him to call them "Scriptures" and translate them as eloquently as possible, to reverse the doctrine about pulling people out of wells on the Sabbath, to deny Christian identifications while affirming later Christian dependency.

For Gaster, high religious experience appears to be primarily mystic, and there is a running

comparison in his book between the religion of the Scrolls and the experiences of mysticism. The Qumran covenanters "achieved, in short, what mystics term the 'unitive state'"; they believed "in a constant cyclic repetition of primordial and archetypal elements"; they resemble the medieval Waldensian Brotherhood; the literary conventions of their hymns "should no more dull our ears to the underlying passion and authenticity of feeling than do the mannered conceits of a Donne or a Herbert or a Vaughan"; they use "the standard and characteristic idiom of mystical experience"; their recurrent despair at God's "seeming remoteness" is comparable to that of St. John of the Cross in "The Dark Night of the Soul," and their sense of renewal and rebirth to that of George Fox's *Journal*.

In 1950, when he published his invaluable *Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East* (with its revealing epigraph from Psalm 39, "Surely every man walketh in a vain shew"), Gaster apparently agreed with Gilbert Murray and Jane Harrison on the primacy of ritual over either belief or the believer's subjective state. In *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, there is one page relating the War Scroll to the ancient Near East seasonal combat, but Gaster now seems to see religion as essentially a matter of inner experience, and to present the Scrolls as evidence that Jewish inner experiences are second to none.

GEOFFREY GRAYSTONE, at thirty-five only a year older than Allegro, is an English Marist Father who has taught Scripture and theology in Marist Seminaries in England and Ireland. *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Originality of Christ*, dated from Rome and published in America with the imprimatur of Bishop Jerome D. Hanna of Scranton, is a reprinting of a series of articles that appeared in the *Irish Theological Quarterly*. Three articles are on the Scrolls themselves and a fourth takes issue with Edmund Wilson's book. (Graystone has published another series of articles in the *Tablet*, not yet in book form, one of which takes issue with Allegro.) Graystone is as passionately unwilling as Gaster, from very different premises, to acknowledge any relationship between Christianity and Judaism, and the effort of his book is to play down the significance of the Scrolls as far as possible. He writes characteristically: "Much of what has been written was a little premature," or

*Some scholars have found: if not Incarnation, at least God's begetting the Messiah (of which more later); definite Atonement and Redemption through Faith; Fritsch has Baptism and a kind of Communion; Dupont-Sommer has detected the outline of the Gospel story, including Passion, Resurrection, and Epiphany; Allegro has added Delivery to the Gentiles, Crucifixion, Burial, and Return in Judgment.

"a number of theories and opinions, one or two a little advanced, have been ventilated on this question." Graystone argues that "Christianity did not in any sense owe its origins to the Qumran sect," and, with a stroke so shrewd it should make the Jesuits look to their laurels, demonstrates that not only are the Scrolls remote from Roman Catholic Christianity, but that they display nothing of the essence of Christianity "as it is understood by leading liberal scholars" (that is, by Protestants).

For Graystone, the issue is a simple dogmatic one: Christianity did not evolve from earlier ideas like a worldly doctrine, but was revealed instantaneously and uniquely by the Passion of Jesus. The Qumran covenanters speak of their "New Alliance" ("New Covenant" in most translations, "New Testament" in King James English), but it is "nothing more than a renewal, however complete, of this old alliance of Sinai," whereas "The Christian 'New Alliance' was effectively established for all men through the blood of Christ, shed in sacrifice on Calvary, and thereby the Old Alliance, concluded between one people and their God at Mount Sinai and sealed by the blood of animal victims, was abrogated." Graystone's distinction between any idea in the Scrolls and its Christian analogue is always that the former "is not based on the teaching and example of the Son of God," and his conclusion is that the Scrolls do not challenge the originality of Christ, as Wilson and others had claimed, but rather "bring into greater relief the uniqueness of Christ." Graystone's view is best summed up in a sentence he quotes approvingly from an article by R. E. Brown in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*: "It should be evident that the basic difference between the two theologies is Christ."

Except for Brown and Canon J. Coppens of Louvain, Graystone does not find Catholic orthodoxy orthodox enough for his taste. He gives a history of the Qumran sect as "the Dominican Fathers actually working on the Cave material in Jerusalem would put it," but he does not agree with the "Catholic scholars of note" (even Coppens to some extent) who "are so struck with the similarities of vocabulary instanced above that they admit that the New Testament writers, particularly John and Paul, borrowed formulae and expressions from the scrolls." Graystone admits no such thing, and dissolves all similarities of vocabulary in the uniqueness of Christ.*

Graystone's tone toward Judaism is always patronizing. He says of the hymn appended to the Manual of Discipline (where in his opinion "the religious sentiment of Qumran attains its high water mark"): "No one will deny the loftiness and sincerity of these sentiments, which sum up much of what was best in Jewish piety and prepare the way for the Christian revelation." Qumran theology is always limited by un-Christian qualities: "the rigid exclusiveness of the sect, their narrow view of predestination, their sharp and inexorable distinction between Sons of Light and Sons of Darkness." The best Graystone can say for the Scrolls sect is that considered alongside the Pharisees, bitterly attacked by Jesus in the Gospels, "the comparison is very much in favor of the sectaries." The only enthusiastic use Graystone seems prepared to make of the Scrolls is to bolster Catholic dogma. He welcomes their evidence of Jewish celibacy, since it shows that Jews in the last century B.C.E. were less benighted than some have alleged, and argues "let no one now object against the virginity of Mary or her virginal marriage with St. Joseph that voluntary celibacy for a higher motive was a thing unheard of and morally impossible among the Jews of that time."

HAROLD H. ROWLEY is professor of Hebrew Language and Literature at the University of Manchester, Allegro's senior colleague and former teacher. His book *The Zadokite Frag-*

*On one scholarly point Graystone seems incredibly confused. The conventional view of an apocryphal work called "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" has been that it is a Jewish document with heavy Christian interpolation. Graystone, with a few other recent Catholic scholars, argues that its origins are Christian. Parts of one of the testaments, the Testament of Levi, were found in the Qumran caves in Aramaic, and some fragments were in the Cairo *genizah* with the Zadokite Document. Graystone and his fellows argue that Levi "is a distinct and pre-Christian work" incorporated in the Testaments. (This decision seems to be made empirically to explain its finding, and not on internal evidence, if I can judge by R. H. Charles's scholarly edition in *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*.) On page 104 of his book, Graystone says: "The influence of *Jubilees* and the *Testaments* on the Qumran documents and especially the Damascus Document is also incontestable." If Graystone believes that the Testaments are a Christian work, written after Jesus' time, how does he think they influenced the Qumran documents, by general agreement (including his) written B.C.E.?

ments and the Dead Sea Scrolls consists of three lectures delivered at Canon Coppens' University of Louvain in March 1952, attempting to summarize the state of our knowledge about the Scrolls. Much of each page is filled with footnotes and citations, and the bibliography of works consulted covers thirty-five pages and consists of almost a thousand books and articles in a dozen languages. Rowley has seriously attempted to read and digest all the scholarship and opinion on the Scrolls, and somewhere in the middle of his book he ventures his own tentative view in a sentence: "The wicked Priest could be identified with Menelaus with much appropriateness, and Onias would appear to be the Teacher of Righteousness."

Rowley seems to be inhibited by no religious or theoretical bias, but to have the temperamental caution of the scholar to an inordinate degree. His preface explains:

"For a long time I refrained from forming any judgment on the age of the Scrolls or on the period which they reflect, and one of my good friends, Mr. J. Leveen, has frequently reproached me for sitting so long on the fence. It seemed to me wiser to suspend judgment until access could be had to all the facts, than to rush to conclusions on very inadequate evidence. Although the full evidence is not yet available, and it may be a long time before all the Scrolls are unrolled and published, there would seem now to be enough access to the facts to warrant a reasonably based view, though I would emphasize that it can only be tentative until all the texts are available."

This tone contrasts sharply with his statement against Allegro after the abashed broadcaster had backed down, as reported in *Time*, April 2, 1956:

"I deplore as unscholarly the presentation to the world of what scholars everywhere have supposed—as I supposed—to be specific statements in an unpublished text to which Mr. Allegro alone had access, when they are only his deductions from evidence which is capable of other interpretations. . . . Mr. Allegro was one of the most promising students I have ever had, and he is capable of doing fine work. I think it is a pity that he was entrusted with the editing of texts far from supervision. . . . Important documents, for which scholars . . . are eagerly waiting, should not be used to give immature scholars a spurious authority."

Rowley's voice only rises, one gathers, when the deepest taboos of the tribe are violated.

I KNOW nothing of the biography or qualifications of Arthur Whitman, except what emerges from a study of his pamphlet. It comes under unimpressive auspices, as a drugstore quickie smeared on the front cover with "New revelations from the cradle of Christianity" and "The Story of the Greatest Religious Discovery of Modern Times," and on the back with a giant question mark and a series of teasing questions, ending "did they claim a superior knowledge of creation. . . ? did they in fact have a superior knowledge. . . ?" The writing is as dramatic as Allegro's, with a physical description of the Arab boy who found the first Scrolls that could only have been invented, and a great deal of melodrama about the buried treasure of gold, silver, and incense described by the copper scroll found in one of the caves, concluding "one of the greatest prizes known to mankind—the fabulous lost treasure of the ancients." There is a certain amount of clumsy writing, and some deliberately lowbrow analogies, including one justifying the disagreements of scholars over the Scrolls by "the vast differences of opinion that exist within the field of medical practice" over such matters as miracle drugs. Whitman makes a number of curious statements, including "Zadok became the first King Solomon," he does not seem to know what "the Law" means among Jews, and he is unfamiliar with Qumran archaeology.

Yet, on the whole, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and What They Mean to Protestant, Catholic, Jew* is enormously better than its merchandising would suggest. Most of its information is solid, its interpretations are sensible, its tone is moderate, and it is probably a less slanted picture of the consensus of opinion about the Scrolls than any of the other books except Rowley's. The "questions and answers about the scrolls" that constitute the last chapter are neither the dogmas of catechism nor the half-truths of sensationalism, but a summary of what has gone before in the form of intelligent questions and sensible answers. Whitman's bias in discussing Palestine history seems to be markedly pro-Israel, so that it is only "oil-rich Arab leaders who objected to Jewish colonization," and as for the Israelis: "Against enormous odds, they outmaneuvered and outfought the Arabs, forcing them after long and bitter fighting to accept the boundaries the U.N. had established." His religious bias, even more surprisingly, appears to be extreme liberal Protestant. In its paraphrases of scholarly and clerical opin-

ion, the pamphlet gives most emphasis to the views of A. Powell Davies, pastor of the Unitarian All Souls Church in Washington, as stated in his book *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Whitman concludes: "Most scholars will agree with the views of writers such as Rev. Davies, and their agreement is, in fact, implicit in most of their writings, even though they may not state it each time they prepare a scholarly article to be read by their colleagues."

IN SHORT, the spectrum is fairly wide. For Allegro, the Scrolls are scripts for historical melodrama. For Fritsch, they document the continuity of the "Judaean-Christian" heritage. To Gaster, they show the mystic beauties of Jewish religious experience, and to Graystone its inadequacies compared to Catholic Christianity. For Rowley, they occasion scrupulosities of scholarship, and they enable Whitman to write a Unitarian tract sugar-coated with sensationalism about buried treasure. Other books seem just as varied in their approaches. I have already reviewed Millar Burrows's *The Dead Sea Scrolls* and Edmund Wilson's *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea* in the *Journal of American Folklore*, October-December 1956, and attempted to define their approaches.

For Burrows, the Scrolls afford an opportunity to demonstrate what I there unkindly called "pussyfooting divinity-school conservatism," and the mountain of his scholarship brings forth the mouse of: "For myself I must go farther and confess that, after studying the Dead Sea Scrolls for seven years, I do not find my understanding of the New Testament substantially affected." For Wilson, the Scrolls are a demonstration of the superior powers of the uncommitted, the maverick, even the amateur. He writes: "One cannot but ask oneself whether the scholars who have been working on the Scrolls—so many of whom have taken Christian orders or been trained in the rabbinical tradition—may not have been somewhat inhibited in dealing with such questions as these by their various religious commitments." "Such an inquirer," he adds, "comes finally to ask himself whether anyone but a secular scholar is really quite free to grapple with the problems of the Dead Sea discoveries."

For Wilson's hero, Professor A. Dupont-Sommer of the Sorbonne, the Scrolls are occasions for elaborate theorizing about pre-Christian Christianity in Essenism, and the imagi-

native reconstruction of history. A characteristically bold Dupont-Sommer reading finds in the sentence "God, through his Anointed, hath made known his Holy Spirit" in the Zadokite Document "something like a Trinitarian theology." For A. Powell Davies, if I can judge by the paraphrase of *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* in Whitman's pamphlet (for I have not yet had an opportunity to read Davies's book itself), the Scrolls are a reaffirmation of the traditional Unitarian or humanist "Jesus the Teacher," the good man deified rather than the god incarnated. For Henry Neumann in *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, a pamphlet published by the New York Society for Ethical Culture, the Scrolls naturally show the glories of ethical culture.

Nor have I yet had an opportunity to read *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Modern Scholarship* by Solomon Zeitlin, professor of Rabbinical Literature at the Dropsie College and Gaster's colleague. From accounts in these books of the series of articles he has published in his *Jewish Quarterly Review* and elsewhere, Zeitlin seems to be engaged in one of the most remarkable King Canute performances in recent scholarship. He has dated the script of the Scrolls at various times from the 7th to the 11th centuries C.E., or quite a few centuries after everyone else, and he has claimed that its palaeographic resemblance to the text of the Zadokite Document Schechter found in the Cairo *genizah* "is so striking as to indicate that they are of the same locality and the same period, i.e. the Middle Ages." Zeitlin suggests that the Scrolls were never actually in the caves or in the jars, since no reputable European or Jewish scholar ever saw them there. He has dismissed the hymns that Gaster finds so impressive as flat and poor, with little poetic quality, a poor copy of the Psalms. In a letter to the *New York Times*, March 30, 1956, he denied that "scrolls written by semi-literate persons could have any influence on Judaism." His articles have such titles as "'A Commentary on the Book of Habakkuk': Important Discovery or Hoax?" "Scholarship and the Hoax of the Recent Discoveries," "The Alleged Antiquity of the Scrolls," "When Were the Hebrew Scrolls 'Discovered'—in 1947 or 1907?" "The Antiquity of the Hebrew Scrolls and the Piltdown Hoax: A Parallel," "The Fiction of the Recent Discoveries Near the Dead Sea," "A Note on the Fiction of the 'Bar Kokba' Letter," "The Propaganda of the

Hebrew Scrolls and the Falsification of History," and so on. As words like "alleged," "hoax," "fiction," and "falsification" make clear, Zeitlin apparently sees the Scrolls as a plot by much of the scholarly world against him and the sanctity of Hebrew studies.

In his pamphlet *The Hebrew Scrolls*, G. R. Driver, professor of Semitic Philology at Oxford, has much more moderately resisted the dating of the Scrolls in antiquity. Professor J. L. Teicher of Cambridge, editor of the *Journal of Jewish Studies*, has identified the Scrolls as products of the Christian heretic Ebionites in the 1st century C.E., explaining the "Teacher of Righteousness" as Jesus and his adversary, the "Wicked Priest," as Paul. Finally, for G. Lankester Harding, director of the Jordan Government Department of Antiquities and the man responsible for most of the excavation at Qumran, they are the occasion for not only a great deal of sober digging but for the liveliest speculation yet. In an article in the *Illustrated London News*, September 3, 1955, Harding suggests that Jesus may very well have visited the Qumran monastery. If before the year is out further excavation turns up a visitor's book with the scrawl "Jeshua ben Joseph, Nazareth," Harding will presumably not be surprised.

WHEN the Scrolls so neatly, like the Apostle Paul, can be all things to all men, it is not surprising that scholarly disagreement exists on the most basic matters. For Dupont-Sommer and Burrows, an outstanding characteristic of the Scrolls is their revelation of Jewish Gnostic dualism, making the Fourth Gospel suddenly not the least Jewish of the Gospels, but the most. Gaster's only comment on the dramatic dualism in his texts, in passages on "the two spirits of man" and "The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness," is "see A. Dupont-Sommer," and his only comment on their equally dramatic Gnosticism is "This is scarcely to be confused with the later more elaborate doctrine of the Gnostics." For Gaster, reference to "exile in the desert of Damascus" in the Zadokite Document is "figurative geography" for "voluntary withdrawal from the normative forms of Jewish life"; for Graystone "Damascus" is "almost certainly a symbolic name for Qumran"; for Fritsch it is a real migration to the real city of Damascus.

The Zadokite Document and a cave fragment say that the members of the community must be thoroughly versed in the "Book of

Hagu." Allegro thinks the Book of Hagu is a scroll we have not yet turned up, "although it is possible that we have it without knowing." Fritsch believes it is the Manual of Discipline itself. Zeitlin doubts that there ever was a Book of Hagu, attributing it to the imagination of the author of the Zadokite Document. Gaster simply translates the problem out of existence, rendering the Book of Hagu as "the Book of Study" and giving his reasons. Gaster does the same with the "Teacher of Righteousness," identified by most scholars as the founder, leader, and sometimes Messiah of the sect, and the subject of an enormous amount of historical speculation. "Teacher of Righteousness," Gaster says, is a mistranslation for the "correct expositor" or "right-teacher" title given to whatever priest had the office of expounding Torah throughout the sect's history. (This does not prevent Gaster from himself using "Teacher of Righteousness" later in his book.)

Sometimes differences of opinion depend on variant readings of the manuscripts. Allegro translates from a fragmentary Manual of Discipline: "When [God] begets the Messiah," explaining "this word could conceivably have been used here with the weakened sense of 'produce' or the like, or it could, as the editors suggest, be a scribal error for 'leads,' but that he has been convinced in favor of 'beget' by the sect's Messianic use of the familiar Christian proof text from II Samuel 7:14, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." Gaster translates the passage "if the anointed king of Israel happens to be present," and comments:

"We may safely leave out of serious consideration the alleged occurrence in this text of a phrase reading, 'If [God] begets the Messiah.' This bizarre statement rests on nothing more substantial than an arbitrary reading of a faded word and an even more capricious restoration of a lacuna. Such a statement, it need scarcely be observed, would be utterly preposterous to a community of Jews committed to belief in the Torah and in the traditional doctrines of their faith. This whole document, in fact, has been egregiously misunderstood."

Where there are no variant readings, the translations nevertheless show remarkable differences, apparently reflecting differences of theology and religious vocabulary. Burrows translates from the Manual: "... for they shall all be in true community and good humility

and loyal love and righteous thought, each for his fellow in the holy council, and they shall be sons of the eternal assembly."

Gaster translates the same passage: "All of them will thus be members of a community founded at once upon true values and upon a becoming sense of humility, upon charity and mutual fairness—members of a society truly hallowed, partners in an everlasting communion." Where Graystone's translation has the hymn at the end of the Manual say that stumbling man will be aided by "God's graces," Gaster translates "God's mercies" and "God's righteousness"; and where Graystone's text asks "What is the son of man?" for Gaster it asks "What is mere mortal man?"

In my review of the Burrows and Wilson books in the *Journal of American Folklore* I tried to define the significance the Scrolls had for the student of mythology and comparative religion, principally their strong evidence for pre-Christian patterns of Christianity and their increasing the likelihood that Jesus was a mythic rather than an historical figure. If some of the speculative interpretations turn out to be true, I wrote there, "For this reviewer, who is relatively unconcerned with the historical origins of Christianity, but inclined to generalize with Lord Raglan that sacred books and myths are never the record of history but always narratives based on rituals, it would be a demonstration of the ritualists' contention in a particularly telling case, where we apparently know so much historical reality, from His trade to His remarks on various public and private occasions." (One more chastening example, obviously, of What You Will.)

Assessing the meaning of the Scrolls for the readers of this magazine seems a great deal harder, and there may be as many meanings as readers. One of the interesting features of the Scrolls is the open polytheism of their Old Testament readings. The text of Deuteronomy 32:43 found in the caves reads: "Rejoice, O ye heavens, with him, and all ye gods worship him." The Septuagint reads "Rejoice, O ye heavens, with him, and let all the angels of God worship him," while the Hebrew Masoretic text (and all our Christian and Jewish Bibles based on it) says simply "Rejoice, O ye nations." It is Wilson's contention in *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea* that one of the factors underlying the resistance of Jewish scholars to accepting the Scrolls and their implications has been "a fear of impairing the

authority of the Masoretic text." Allegro does conclude that the authority of the Masoretic text has been somewhat impaired, with more authority established for the Septuagint where it differs, and "a remarkable vindication" of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Fritsch's conclusion from the same evidence, however, is the opposite; he finds the Scrolls "supporting the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition."

THE threat to Jewish peace of mind that seems to me much greater than challenges to the Masoretic text is the Scrolls' evidence that monolithic Judaism is a modern invention retrospectively imposed on history. The Qumran Jews apparently considered themselves orthodox, and were considered orthodox, despite some remarkable innovations. They did not sacrifice in the Temple in Jerusalem (here the Manual of Discipline disagrees with the Zadokite Document, which says that under certain conditions, and perhaps at another time, they did). They had a solar rather than a lunar calendar, so that holidays and even Sabbaths did not coincide with orthodoxy's. (The late Ralph Marcus suggested in "Pharisees, Essenes and Gnostics" in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1954, that they did not carry out their unorthodox calendar in practice, "otherwise these covenanters would have been stigmatized as heretics," but Marcus may simply have been assuming the monolith.)

Many of their views we would certainly stigmatize as heretic, including their celibacy, ritual baptism, and wildly uncanonical scriptures. Their keeping of the Sabbath, even if it came on a Wednesday, seems to have been extraordinarily rigid: despite Gaster's emendation, it is not at all unlikely that anyone unlucky enough to fall into a well on that day was allowed to drown, and they certainly dispensed with that invaluable Jesuitical institution, the *shabbos goy*—the Zadokite Document says flatly: "No one is to commission a Gentile to transact business for him on the Sabbath day." Like the earlier orthodox Jews of Elephantine in Egypt in the early 6th century B.C.E., whose papyri reveal that their god had a female consort named Anat Yahveh, and who had apparently never heard of the Law, the Patriarchs, or the Sabbath, the Jews of Qumran would find it harder to make the grade today.

While the Dead Sea Scrolls were being hawked around Jerusalem, a new edition of Sir

Frederic Kenyon's *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* was in press with the statement "there is no probability that we shall ever find manuscripts of the Hebrew text going back to a period before the formation of the text which we know as Masoretic." The example suggests that it is well to be tentative about these matters, when the next discoveries may overturn everything we know. In our time there has been a wild fascination with the discoveries of Near East archaeology, or any archaeology, and one popular summary after another has become a best-seller. One widespread theory is that all those book-buyers are in quest of religious certainty, or even documentation (for Christian doubters, perhaps the authenticating texts of such reassuring apocrypha as Pilate's Letters or Peter's Gospel; for Jewish doubters, perhaps fragments of the original Ten Commandments or of Noah's Ark). Here the example of the Scrolls seems to

suggest that less certainty comes from more documents and artifacts, that new evidence only serenely confirms everyone in the line he was already pursuing.

There is a great deal of solid information to be acquired from these six books: Allegro prints translations of the variant Bible readings in tabular form; Allegro and Fritsch, in photographs and descriptions, give us the physical reality of the site, the caves, the jars, and the script itself; Gaster gives us readable translations of the texts, and a superb analytic index of their ideas and of Bible quotations and parallels; Rowley chews and digests the millions of words written on the subject for us; even Graystone and Whitman add to our knowledge. Around this well-lighted clearing there are the shifting figures of theory dancing in the shadows, and the animal growlings of passion and prejudice. Out there you venture at your peril.

AFTERWARD . . .

LIONEL ABEL

I THINK of Jacob, tired, alone,
 His best adversary gone,
 Jacob, an arm half-through his sleeve,
 Doubting, fighting to believe
 That the wrestler whom he'd hurt,
 Tripped, and set down in the dirt,
 Embraced in fear, and strangling, pinned—
 Had not like him, Jacob, sinned;
 And that, against his better sense
 And what there was of evidence,
 He, he, Jacob, lamed and spent,
 Fast losing his astonishment,
 More earth's now even than the dirt on him
 Was—the champion of heaven!

LIONEL ABEL (whose review of Camus's *The Fall* appeared in our last month's issue) has published verse, criticism, and fiction in the literary journals. He has also had two plays produced in New York City, one of which, *Absalom*, won two "best off-Broadway" awards for 1956; the other, *The Death of Odysseus*, was published in *Playbook*, recently put out by New Directions.